

Mary Mair and William Lindsay

Mary Mair

Mary Mair Lindsay, the daughter of Mary Murdoch and Allan Mair, was born at Carbellow near Lugar in Auchinleck Parish, Ayrshire, Scotland on August 1, 1852. Her father was a farmhand, or shepherd, and was mostly employed herding sheep on the bonny heather hills. Her mother was an industrious woman, having worked out for people in her youth to help her mother sustain the family after her father lost his life trying to save the life of another.

Mary was the only girl in the family; she had five brothers, three older than herself and two younger. The two oldest, John and James, came to America when they became of age, and went to Maryland, one working as a carpenter and the other as a coal miner. One girl and two boys died as children.

Allan Mair and Mary Murdoch were married in June 1841, and they seemed to get along nicely until about 1850 when the Mormon elders came to that part of Scotland preaching an entirely different doctrine than what was taught by the ministers of the churches. Allan Mair, Mary's father, like many others could not see any need of a new religion. The church and religion of his fathers was good enough for him. Her mother, on the other hand, became very interested in the new religion, and she was baptized on June 4, 1851, by a missionary, William Aird. Wee Grannie and William Murdoch's wife and Veronica Murdoch Caldwell also became baptized.

She tried to convert her husband, but he refused to hear the gospel or have anything to do with it. And now in a home where there had been peace and harmony, there was friction. So there came a time when Mary's mother decided to leave her husband and home, and if possible to bring her three youngest children to Utah, where they would enjoy the blessings of the gospel. This was in the year 1866. To do this, it was necessary to get Mary's cooperation, which she did. Mary was then thirteen years of age, Andrew was ten, and Alex seven. An older brother, Foulds, was soon to be married, and his mother felt that he would look after his father.

It took some time making the arrangements and getting everything ready for leaving without her father suspecting that something was going on. Mary's mother would fix bundle after bundle of clothing of all kinds, and Mary would carry these to the station and mail them to a friend who would keep them until the time they would start for Utah. This friend, John Aird, had to keep them posted as to when to leave home just in time to get on the ship taking Mormon emigrants, as

delays would have been dangerous. John Aird had secured them passage on the St. Mark, a sailing vessel.

Everything worked out just right, and the mother and children left home with the understanding that they were only going on a short visit. Andrew asked his father to care for his rabbits until he got back. Of course, when Allan, the father, found out that his wife and three children were actually gone on a ship, the St. Mark, bound for New York, he sent a telegram to his sons in Maryland asking them to at least prevent the children from going to Utah. His sons came to New York, but were just a little too late. So of course, the mother and children went on.

This was the last time Mary was to see her father and brother, Foulds. Some thirty-one years later on May 2, 1897, her father, Allan Mair, died, and in November of that year Foulds answered a letter he had received from Mary Murdoch Mair, his mother. In part the letter from Foulds says: "Dear Mother, You want to know the kind of feeling we had when you went away; for my father, I think he always thought you would come back again, for he would never allow the door to be barred at night and he always wondered how the children would be getting along. And for myself, I felt very lonely for a long time. And Dear Mother, I have searched the scriptures a good deal, and I don't see it makes any difference which country you may be living in, for the service of our Lord and Savior.... You say we are to leave and follow our Lord, and are right too, but is Scotland not as near to heaven as America.... If I was near you we would have a sweet talk over it. But if we don't meet in this world, Dear Mother, I hope we'll meet in the one to come...."

What wonderful faith and courage Mary's mother manifested to leave her husband and home under such circumstances, and to undertake such a journey, knowing too that her dear old mother had perished on the way crossing the plains, and that her brother John and wife saw their two children die on the way to Utah, some years before. But knowing all this, she still had faith and courage enough to undertake the long and wearisome journey across the ocean and across the dreary plains.

They felt the hand of the Lord helped them across the mighty deep. It took them ten days to go from New York to Florence, Nebraska on the Missouri River. It was a hard journey for emigrants, as there were many changes to make from steamboats to railroads and back again several times. There was no direct line from the East to the West at that time. But Mormon emigrants always had some person in charge whose business it was to look after all the rest and see that they and their baggage were properly cared for.

They were assigned to cross the plains in Captain Andrew Scott's ox train. This of course, was another new and strange experience for them, and one that was very trying for everyone. The teamsters with their oxen and wagons

had come all the way from Utah for the purpose of hauling the sick and infirmed and the baggage and food supplies necessary to sustain them on their long and tedious journey. The teamsters were usually rather rough-looking young men, many of them less than eighteen years old, dressed mostly in homespun or buckskin, armed with heavy long whips, and calling loudly "whoa," "ha," and "gee." This was the means they used to guide the oxen. Of course all this shouting at the oxen, who were slow and stupid, and the cracking of the long whips was new to the emigrants. The sleeping in tents, cooking over fires in skillets and frying pans in the smoke, traveling in wind, and dust and rain was rather trying. Flour and bacon were practically all that was provided in the way of food, and many did not know how to make bread or fry their bacon over a campfire. Everyone had to walk that possibly could, and they were warned to keep near the wagons even if it was dusty and uncomfortable. Of course, prayers were attended to night and morning in the corral formed by the wagons for protection from Indians and also where the oxen could be easily yoked up. Thus they traveled from day to day for two months.

As they came into the mountains, Mary was taken ill with mountain fever, which was similar to typhoid. This, of course, was the cause of great anxiety to her mother, but through the blessings of the Lord in answer to prayer, and through her mother's kind care, she was spared. They arrived safely at Uncle John Murdoch's in Heber about the eighth of October, 1866. Thirty persons had died on this dreary journey. Thousands have laid their wearied bodies down by the wayside, trying to reach the gathering place of the Saints. Mary's mother and her family all reached the valley and found good, kind friends in her brother John Murdoch and family, who took them into their home and supplied their wants until they were able to provide for themselves.

Mary, though still weak and pale from her illness, soon recovered and was baptized November 25, 1866 by Thomas Todd. She could not be baptized while in Scotland, as her father would not consent to it. Her mother was married to Thomas Todd as a plural wife, and he began to provide for the needs of the family. But Mary began to work out for other families and in that way earned her own living.

Soon after her arrival in Heber, she became acquainted with a young man named William Lindsay, and an attachment sprang up between them as the years went by. William had come to Heber from Scotland four years before.

The following is William Lindsay's description of Mary when he first met her: "Mary was then fourteen years of age, and she attracted my attention more than any other girl I had seen, and I visited her quite often. She had been ill crossing the plains, but soon got well and strong and was a very fine looking girl. Her cheeks were red, her eyes blue gray, and her hair was a very light yellow. And above all, she had a smiling face and a kindly sociable disposition,

and a winning way that won my heart, and I seemed to win hers. There were two or three suitors who tried to win her affection, but they gave it up as they saw I was her choice. We were very happy in each other's company always, which in time, was very frequent; at meetings, Sunday School, dances, concerts and theaters. She had to work at different homes to earn her living and I used to visit her there at times. We never had any lover's quarrels as some do. Of course, I had to go off at times to work here and there, but I always got a welcome home from Mary."

William Lindsay, the man in Mary Mair's life, was born near Ardie, Lanarkshire, Scotland on February 11, 1847. He was the second son in a family of nine children, born to William and Christina Howie Lindsay. When he was about fifteen months old he lost the sight of his right eye by being struck with a sharp piece of a broken dish. His parents were members of the LDS Church at this time. He screamed and cried with the severe pain of his injured eye, so they had the elders lay their hands on his head and give him a blessing. He stopped crying and the pain left him. This special blessing strengthened the Lindsay's faith in the gospel they had recently embraced a month or so before.

His father was a coal miner, and wages were less than a dollar a day. For various reasons they had to move quite often, so William did not get much chance to go to school--one year was all, but he had a very good teacher and made rapid progress, being in fourth grade when he was nine years old. At that age he went into the coal mine with his brother, Robert, to work with their father. The boys pushed the little cars of coal from where their father mined it to the bottom of the shaft, where it was taken to the surface and most of it loaded onto ships and sent to other countries.

There was a law in Scotland that boys under ten years of age could not work in the mines unless they could read and write. One day the mine inspector was inspecting the mine in company with the mine owner. The inspector noticed William, who was only nine years old, and small for his age. The inspector asked his age and then said, "Read for me," and he drew a book from his pocket. William passed the test; then he was asked to spell "Carmelbank," which he did successfully. As a reward, the inspector gave him a shilling, the first shilling William had ever had. He felt very rich indeed, but went straight to his father and gave it to him.

Soon after his father was baptized, he was ordained an elder and presided over the Ayr Branch of the Church. Every Sunday they walked three miles to church and three miles back, and the mother often carried a little child fastened on her back with a shawl. William Lindsay, Sr., had a great desire to raise his family properly, and to bring them to Utah to help build Zion.

On October 17, 1861, William and his brother, James were working in the mine with their father. They were moving the coal that their father dug in little coal cars. When they returned with the cars, they found him dead under a large stone. It was indeed a sad day. Besides losing

their dear father, it seemed all their hopes of coming to Utah were blasted. The brave little mother called her children around her and said, "Never mind, we'll go to Zion on the first boat in the spring." And her words proved true. Their father was buried in Saint Andrew's Kirkyard in the town of Kilmarnock. The boys had to go back to the mine to support the family.

In April 1862, the Lindsay family received word from the Church office in Liverpool that arrangements had been made for Christina and all her family to cross the Atlantic with a company of 700 Saints. There was great rejoicing in their home. Christina sold everything she would not need for the journey, and on the morning of April 18 they left Bonnie Scotland. When they reached Liverpool they boarded the sailing ship John J. Boyd to go to America. They stood the voyage all right, and arrived in New York after two weeks on the ocean. They went by train to Saint Joseph on the Missouri and then went by steamboat to Florence. Here they were met by old Robert McKnight, with a basket full of scones and a bucket of milk, which were very much appreciated after their rations. He arranged for the Lindsay family to live in a small log cabin while waiting at Florence to cross the plains.

The ox teams arrived about the twentieth of July, and the Lindsay family was assigned to John Turner's wagon from Heber, Utah. They were in the Homer Duncan Company, and were the first Church train to leave Florence for Utah that year. About the third day out they reached the Platte River, and a dance was held on a sandy place in honor of the twenty-fourth of July, the day Brigham Young and his pioneer band reached Salt Lake City fifteen years before. This company had the same trials, hardships, and experiences as other similar groups, and many nights they gathered around the campfire and sang songs together. The Lindsay family traveled without sickness or serious trouble. At Silver Creek they were met by John and George Muir, who urged the Lindsays to come to Heber, which was just being settled and where land was cheap and water was plentiful. And being in a Heber wagon, they went straight to Heber.

Christina Lindsay and her children, Robert, William, James, Samuel, Andrew, Jean, Elizabeth, and Isabell were glad to settle down after five months of traveling.

William said, "I liked the looks of the little valley the first time I saw it, which was on the 21st of September 1862. I hoped to make my future home here, and help subdue the wilderness." William was then fifteen years old.

The family arrived in Heber on Friday and on Sunday it was arranged for William to go to work for George Carlile on Monday. His wages were to be \$100.00 for a year's work to be paid in wheat at \$2.00 a bushel. The grain was just being harvested, and his job was raking the bundles of wheat. As George Carlile cut the wheat with a cradle, his poor old mother bound it in bundles as William raked them into shape. He soon got so he could rake the bundles and help to bind them too. His brother Robert also hired out, and this way their mother could get wheat for herself and her children.

William attended Sunday School in the log meeting-house, and he was made a deacon and helped to chop the wood and carry it into the meetinghouse to keep the two fireplaces going in the winter.

Later William was able to buy a cow, so his mother and brothers and sisters could have milk and butter on their bread. He began working as a farmhand; he fed stock, hauled poles for fences, and hauled sand rock to build houses. He was finally able to get a yoke of steers, and he and his brother invested in a wagon. He then hauled wood and coal to Salt Lake to sell. He took one load of wood to President Brigham Young's woolen factory at the mouth of Parley's Canyon to trade for some certain kinds of cloth his mother needed. The man in charge there needed the wood and had the kinds of cloth William wanted, but he said he could not dispense any cloth without an order signed by President Young. So William, in his dirty, rough clothes, went into Salt Lake to Brigham Young's, and President Young signed the order.

On the twenty-sixth of May, 1866, William enrolled in the territorial militia and joined John M. Murdoch's Company of Infantry. This was because of the Indians under Black Hawk causing trouble.

In the fall of 1867, William was called to haul rock from the Little Cottonwood Quarry to the Salt Lake Temple which was then under construction. When spring came in 1868, he was to bring emigrants back to Utah. But before he left he got a promise from his dear girl, Mary-Mair, that she would marry him when he returned.

The trip east was not an easy one. They had high rivers to cross and sometimes had to build bridges and had trouble getting across some rivers where they had to swim. They traveled through Indian country and had to be on the lookout all of the time. They waited on the North Platte for the emigrants to arrive by train. His emigrants were Scandinavians and of course they had a little trouble communicating. But they soon learned to understand each other. They returned to Salt Lake the last of September.

As soon as William reached Heber, he found that many of the local men were up at Echo Canyon working on the grade of the Union Pacific Railroad. He was anxious to earn some money before winter set in as he and Mary were planning to get married before the year was out, so he set out for Echo Canyon. There he found about twenty-two men from Heber working, but they were badly in need of cooks and dishes. The men were living in dugouts on the side of the hill. They agreed to build an extra dugout for William and the cooks if William would get someone. Immediately William returned to Heber and got his mother to say she would go with him and bring her stove and dishes. Then he saw his best girl, Mary, and got her consent to come along, so she got her mother's permission. So early the next morning, the three of them started on the two-day journey to Echo. Everything was ready for the women when they arrived, so they went right to work preparing and serving the food. They got along fine and gave excellent satisfaction. They stayed there for two months, each woman receiving \$45.00 per month for her services. The

we are very proud, and whose lives we should emulate. They loved the Gospel of Jesus Christ and truly lived it to the end of their lives. They truly endured to the end.



Mary Mair and William Lindsay
Marriage Picture Dec. 15, 1868

--Compiled by Virginia D. Christensen
Taken from the writings of
William Lindsay



Mary Mair and William Lindsay
1913



Mary Mair and William Lindsay
At the farm house.

THE FARM HOUSE



This home was located at Lindsay's Del.
near Heber City, Wasatch, Utah